

Sensational Flea Market Find Museum piece by Hanns Bolz surfaces

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Press release from: [Ketterer Kunst](#)



Munich, 12 November 2008, (kk) - Hanns Bolz was one of the most influential precursors of Modernism in the early 20th century. A contemporary of his, the writer Karl Otten, pronounced that Bolz's "pictures went further than even Delaunay and Picasso dared to go".

Many of Hanns Bolz's works are believed lost since he left explicit instructions in his will for his entire oeuvre to be destroyed. It is nothing short of sensational, therefore, that his "Porträt des Kunsthändlers Alfred Flechtheim" ["Portrait of the Art Dealer Alfred Flechtheim"] (ca 1910/11) is to go under the hammer at the auctions inaugurating the new Ketterer Kunst House for Art on 3 and 4 December 2008. The estimate of € 18 000-24 000 is very conservative indeed.

"Attribution of this oil painting measuring 41 x 33 cm was difficult but, after a year's research, we now know definitely that this highly expressive portrait is a genuine Bolz even though it bears no signature," thus Robert Ketterer, auctioneer and owner of Ketterer Kunst. The attribution to Bolz is verified in a current appraisal report by Ernst Cremer in Aachen. The authorship has been confirmed by both Professor Dr. Heusinger von Waldegg and Erich Kukies, compiler of the online catalogue of Hanns Bolz' complete works.

Born in Aachen in 1885, Hanns Bolz studied at the Düsseldorf Art Academy before going to Paris, probably early in 1909, to take over Pablo Picasso's little Montmartre studio at 49 rue Gabrielle. Among Bolz's close friends were Max Ernst and Otto Freundlich, who was also a witness to Bolz's marriage.

Once in Paris, Bolz soon joined the little German artists' colony that had become established around Purmann and Levy at the Café du Dôme. The distinguished art dealer Alfred Flechtheim made a prescient decision in showing works by this circle,

which was, stylistically speaking, anything but homogeneous, at his Paris gallery for the first time in 1914. In Paris Journal, Guillaume Apollinaire was unsparing in his criticism of the exhibition of works by the German “Dômiers”; Hanns Bolz was one of the few he had anything positive to say about. The acerbic poet and art critic credited Bolz with a “keen intellect”.

Bolz probably painted the present portrait of Alfred Flechtheim, which must be regarded as a major work by the Rhenish Expressionist, in that period which was so formative for his art. The perspective he has chosen allows the sitter’s head to fill the picture and backlighting lends the facial features particular solemnity and weight. This work unites inspiration from Paris painting with a tendency towards New Objectivity, thus uniquely exemplifying the inimitably distinctive contribution Hanns Bolz made to Classic Modernism.

The provenance could not be better and speaks for itself: “Der Neue Kunstsalon Max Dietzel, Munich” and “Neue Kunst Hans Goltz, Munich” (on the stretcher with the label).

The artist’s end was tragic: during the Great War, Hanns Bolz suffered severe gas poisoning and was discharged prematurely from the Imperial Army to die of his war injuries at the age of only thirty-three in the Neuwittelsbach Spa Institute in 1918. Of his oeuvre, which came to such an untimely end, only a small remnant has survived. It is all the more poignant that this particular important portrait should once again come to light to be revealed to an interested public after the lapse of so much time.

Auction venue: Ketterer Kunst, new House for Art, 18 Joseph-Wild-Strasse, 81829 Munich.

Auctions begin: 3 December: 4.30 pm: Side lines of the German Avant-garde
approx 5.30pm: Modern Art

4 December: 5.30 pm: Collection Stiftung Kunst und Recht
approx 6 pm: Post War & Contemporary Art

Pre-sale viewings have been scheduled for the following dates, times and venues:

Mo 17 November - Th 20 November, 11 am-6 pm (selected works)
Ketterer Kunst, Meißberg 1, Hamburg

Sa 22 November - Fr 28 November, 11 am-7 pm (selected works)
Ketterer Kunst, Fasanenstrasse 70, Berlin

Sa 29 November, 11 am-6 pm (all works)
Su 30 November, 11 am-6 pm; from 11 am: Advent brunch
Mo 1 December- Tu 2 December, 10 am-8 pm
Ketterer Kunst, Joseph-Wild-Strasse 18, Munich-Riem

Since it was founded in 1954, Ketterer Kunst has been firmly established in the front ranks of auction houses dealing in art and rare books with headquarters in the Prinz Alfons Palais in Munich and a branch in Hamburg. Gallery rooms in Berlin as well as representatives in Heidelberg, Krefeld and New York have contributed substantially to the company's success. Ketterer Kunst has further rounded off its portfolio by acquiring the prestigious Ernest Rathenau Verlag, New York/Munich. In addition, exhibitions, special auctions, benefit auctions for charity and live online auctions are regular events at Ketterer Kunst.

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